



FOR PARENTS – BE A PART OF THE LCMS YOUTH GATHERING

Whether it's your student's first experience with the LCMS Youth Gathering or not, preparing for the event is an exciting time. Your child is about to experience speakers, service, worship, and growth in Christ with their peers. As a parent, it can be difficult to not be right beside your child during this experience, so we'd like to invite you to consider joining from afar in several ways.

Pray

First and foremost, please be in prayer for your child. Commit to praying each day for the Gathering, your church youth group, and your child specifically. Ask the Spirit to work mightily in them and those with them so that they may see how Christ works In All Things.

End at the Beginning

Find out ahead of time, what your child will be experiencing and talk with them about the elements of the Gathering that you will be excited to hear about. Attending meetings planned by your adult leader can help with this. The schedules are really packed during the Gathering and it might be tough to contact your student during the event. Understand the busyness and be ready to debrief when they have returned and are rested. Before they go, let them know of your excitement to hear about the event on their return.

Follow Along

Ask your students which sectionals they plan to attend. Spend time praying for those speakers. Avoid checking in multiple times a day but consider keeping a running list of sectionals to help your child debrief when they return. It often takes several days for students to process what they've learned and heard over the course of the week. Give them time and space if they may not be ready to share during a phone call during the event. Take notes of things you hear from your youth that you can follow up on for future conversations.

Check LCMS Gathering Social Media

Throughout the event, social media will be updated at LCMS Youth Gathering on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. One of the great things about social media is that it gives you a visual of what is going on at the Gathering. If you haven't attended a Gathering before, the pictures and videos on social media can help you see and hear what the event is like. This can help you understand the event and debrief with your child.



Watch the Stadium Events

The Stadium Events are a highlight of The Gathering. These events are the time when the entire Gathering gathers together under one roof to praise, learn, and celebrate. These events are opportunities to worship, spend time together as a community of believers, and grow as a disciple of Jesus. One of the awesome features of the Stadium Events is that they are live streamed! Watch along as we discover what it means that God is In All Things. Once again, take notes about the topics you want to discuss with your child- there may not be time while they are at the Gathering, but those conversations after the Gathering ends can really help your child process their experience and help you be connected to the experience.

Be Ready to Care for Teen as You Return

When they get back, your child may be tired. They have just experienced an intense five days of activities, servant events, Bible study, people, walking, waiting, Stadium Events, sectionals, fun, highs and lows with friends, group studies, eating on the fly, sightseeing and much, much more! Be prepared for them to need some extra time sleeping and recovering when they get back. Encourage them to drink lots of water, be ready to do lots of laundry, and encourage them to share their experience.

Be Sure to Debrief

Some will start sharing with you right after you pick them up from their drop off, some may wait a day or two, but they will all have a lot to share. Give them time, but don't give up asking about the event. Ask open ended questions and listen well. Follow up questions can help you find out more about their experience.

Encourage youth to journal as the event as it takes place or to find ways to document what they do on the app. Youth who have taken the opportunity to journal during retreats and gatherings, really find it worthwhile months to years later to review. It can also help them share and process what they saw and heard.

Some Discussion Starters:

- What was the part of the Gathering you enjoyed the most? Why?
- If you could have changed one thing, what would it be?
- What was the main topic of the day (1,2,3,4,5)? How did you grow through that message?
- How can we apply what you learned in our home? Church? Community?
- What's one thing you wish you could share with your friends or family?
- How did your group do together? Did you get closer to anyone?
- How did you see God at work at the Gathering?



If you want to continue the conversation, take advantage of other resources of our Synod. youthsource.com provides a great deal of resources for parents, under the free resource tab, “Parents Resources” towards the bottom. One resource in that category is entitled, “At Home Discussion Guide for 40 Teaching End Goals for Youth Ministry.” By initiating these discussions at home, you are working to enhance your relationship with your student.

You are a huge part of the Gathering experience before, during and after the event. We pray that God will work through your child’s Gathering experience to help draw both them and you closer to closer to Jesus and their church and youth community.